

# Rose Valley Borough

## *A Small Borough Achieves Big Conservation Goals*

“This is how the process should work!”

— Guy Smith, Borough Solicitor

Rose Valley Borough in Delaware County faced the potential destruction of natural and historic landscape features when the Saul Estate, the borough's last large estate, was proposed for development. Existing zoning would have permitted homes on one-acre lots spread across the 26-acre estate, a National Register-eligible complex by the prominent “Arts and Crafts” style architect William Price. With assistance from Natural Lands Trust, Rose Valley adopted a *Growing Greener: Conservation by Design* ordinance in 2006 and worked with the developer on a conservation design emphasizing compact, age-targeted homes.

This conservation plan will preserve the historic estate house on a three-acre “conservancy lot,” along with several historic outbuildings, a bridge, and numerous arboretum-quality trees, including a 60-foot tall dawn redwood. The adjacent 12-acre Maurice and Adele Saul Wildlife Sanctuary expanded in size when the developer,



*Arboretum quality trees, such as this dawn redwood, will be preserved as a result of development. Under the prior development regulations, these trees would most likely have been destroyed.*



*The historic complex by Arts and Crafts style architect William Price will be preserved in an elegant setting.*



Natural Lands Trust



Vaughan and Sautter Builders, donated nearly six acres of permanently preserved open space from the development. Upgrades to the municipal sewer plant, required to handle the additional homes, will also benefit the community as a whole.

From the beginning, Borough officials involved the close-knit community in the decision-making process. In a community of only 300 households, the first public meeting attracted over 225 residents. Residents supported the conservation design concept and process of identifying the conservation features first. Guy Smith, Borough Solicitor observed that in all his years of serving as a municipal attorney “this is how the process should work!”

*The developer donated nearly six acres of land to the adjoining wildlife sanctuary, at no cost to the Borough.*



*The developer incorporated “Arts and Crafts” style elements into the design of his new residences.*

Growing Greener: Conservation by Design is a collaborative program of the PA DCNR, the Governor’s Center for Local Government Services, Natural Lands Trust, and advisors from state and local agencies. The program helps municipalities use the development process to their advantage to protect interconnected open space networks. Communities that adopt these standards are preserving an average of 62% of land each time a property is developed.

*For more information, contact:*

Natural Lands Trust  
1031 Palmers Mill Road  
Media, PA 19063  
610-353-5587 ext.270  
[www.natlands.org](http://www.natlands.org)